NORTH Bi NORTHWEST

Newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, a member project of Gay Community Social Services

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BORN AGAIN PRIDE
By Janice Van Cleve

Gay Pride Day. This is the day once a year when Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered peoples of all colors, sizes, family configurations, fetishes and finances gather to remember the past, to look forward to the challenges and possibilities of the future, and to reclaim who they are. Usually held in late June, Gay Pride Day commemorates the Stonewall Riots that broke out in New York City's west side on June 28, 1969. The Stonewall Riots are generally considered the Bunker Hill of the gay liberation movement for equal rights and recognition.

in the parade with one contingent or another. Sometimes I march with one for a distance, drop out to the sidelines, and then join in with a later group to continue to the finish. We eventually end up at Volunteer Park where there is entertainment, speakers, and vendor booths. Many of the organizations have booths set up as well to offer information and to promote their causes.

I never listen to the speeches or watch the performers. They have their value to be sure, but I much prefer to seek out old friends and to check up on the myriad organizations that serve and are served by our gay community. So inevitably I find myself spending most of the day after the parade browsing the booths, chatting with the staffers there, and gathering information.

That's how I came upon the booth for the Legal Marriage Alliance of Washington. These folks are working to win the right of same sex couples to marry legally in Washington State. The volunteers behind the counter were very enthusiastic. They pressed upon me the importance of this issue. They asked me to sign a petition in support. They claimed that the barriers to marriage, like those to the military or to the ministry, were the three key bastions of institutionalized homophobia in this country.

I loved their energy and their zeal. Not one of them had a clue that I was one of the founders of LMA ten years ago and its leader for many years – teaching and preaching the sermon they were giving me today. Beautiful!

The same thing happened at the booth for the Commission for Sexual Minorities. Ten years ago it was called the Commission for Gays and Lesbians. As a commissioner then I spearheaded the efforts for domestic partner registration. I also resurrected sensitivity training for the police on sexual orientation and gender identity issues and worked on the committee looking into the controversy about sex in the parks. They asked if I would be interested in serving on the commission. I declined. I already have the t-shirt.

Then there was the booth for Equality Washington, a new organization for political action and lobbying. It is the latest heir to the legacies of the Dorian Group, Privacy Fund, Hands Off Washington, Fairness Lobby, and a host of other efforts to win normal civil rights for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered citizens in our state. Every year we introduce a very modest bill to include our people in the same protections as other minorities for housing, jobs, credit, and insurance. Every year the catholic archbishop and radical evangelicals team up to pressure the legislators to refuse us. And every year through stonewalling, death by committee, parliamentary trickery, and vote switching, bigotry wins and justice fails. At least this year we got a vote on the senate floor, which is some sort of success.

I testified for this bill fifteen years ago and again twelve years ago. I worked on campaigns and led the effort to unseat three of the most virulent homophobes in 1998 after they pushed through their so-called "defense of marriage act" which declares that our love for our partners and our families is not good enough for legal recognition. We were successful, but

...Continued on page 4

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We welcome submissions from women and men that concern feminism, politics, sexuality, or anything of interest to bisexual women. Help define our culture! Share your histories, anger, pleasure, energy. Send us your essays, poetry, photographs, drawings, book reviews, short stories, interviews, media reports, rants, cartoons, erotica, journals, theory, conversations and letters. You're important to us and what you have to say is important to everyone.

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Deadline for submissions to the new issue: October 22, 2005

SBWN Statement of Purpose

We are a group of self-identified women from diverse backgrounds working to create a feminist bisexual support network. We promote, in both the heterosexual world, and in the lesbian/gay community, the understanding and acceptance of bisexuality as one of many valid sexual identities.

We regard ourselves as part of the community united against heterosexism and homophobia. We are dedicated to the right of all people to define their own sexuality, free from any social, political, or economic coercion. The discriminations we face based on our gender and our sexuality are not the only forms of oppression. We recognize that oppression is non-hierarchical and that none of us is free until all of us are free. We have invested ourselves in the feminist struggle to transform our culture into one free of all forms of bigotry, hatred, and exploitation.

We seek to provide a safe place for women to explore all aspects of their sexual orientation and identity. All women are welcome to attend SBWN activities: We are exclusively a women's group in order to create a safe space for women's expression and leadership. We come together to affirm ourselves and our choices.

North Bi Northwest

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SBWN can always use volunteers to help with a variety of tasks. Give us a call or talk to a facilitator at a meeting.

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From the Editor...

SBWN had a great participation in Pride. We made some money at our booth selling buttons and tee shirts and other stuff. The booth was staffed both days and we had close to thirty people marching with us on Sunday. We had two banners, ours and BiNet's, and lots of signs proclaiming our bisexuality. We got many bursts of applause and cheers from the crowd. Thanks to everyone that helped make SBWN's Pride participation a success.

In this issue we have several different Pride experiences as well as lots of photographs from Seattle Pride. We have some book reviews by Lisa who tackled some of the more academic tomes SBWN has been sent to review. And we have a piece by Pete Chevny who has been absent from our pages for quite a while. Shannon is our Valued Volunteer this issue. She's been coming to group for a year and helped a lot with the booth and the marching contingent. We have some comments from support group meetings. The Coming Out meeting was particularly well attended with several newbies who learned about us at Pride.

Our elected officials are getting ready to approve or fight the appointment of a conservative to the Supreme Court following Sandra Day O'Connor's' resignation. The opposition finally gave up and let Christine Gregoire continue as Governor of Washington. I continue to be inundated with appeals for money and support from a multitude of liberal causes. The following quote resonates with me in this conservative political climate.

"Other than telling us how to live, think, marry, pray, vote, invest, educate our children and, now, die, I think the Republicans have done a fine job of getting government out of our personal lives."

-Editorial Page, Sunday, June 19 Portland Oregonian

We had another team-building/going away party event at work. We went to Champs Karting again (favourite activity of the person leaving) and I drove a go cart and played pool, both badly though I did win the pool game 'cause my opponent sunk the 8 ball one ball too soon. I was 'sitting out' my last race, since I injured my hand on the first two and was feeling distinctly wobbly at the end of race two. I got better though, my times dropped significantly from round one to round two. I have a nasty bruise on my right hand where I pushed hard on a spoke of the 'too small for my taste' steering wheel to make all those sharp left hand turns. I got bumped several times by people trying to speed around slowpoke me. I was very consistent in that I took home yet another 'Least likely to win the Indy 500' medal. Last year I got that one and also 'Best Team' 'cause we had teams last time. Next day one of my co-workers, who hadn't made the event, expressed surprise at seeing me at work. He said that he'd heard that I had been bumped a lot and what about that three car pileup? There was no actual crash of course, just a lot of minor close calls. It's so hard to see anywhere but directly in front of you with those helmets on and the speed you are seemingly going. I ached quite a bit from the cramped space and the unusual exercise. I think I stressed out my left thumb holding on tightly to the wheel. I am so used to power steering! I always feel like a fish out of water at these team-building events. Since I am a long-term contract worker it seems strange to be participating in these exercises for the regular employees. The others all seem to be comfortable, chatting about work and mutual friends and I feel like an intruder, an outsider on the fringe of the corporate society.

A friend treated me to an evening at the Olympus Spa as a present for my birthday. I got to spend hours soaking in warm turbulent water and lying stretched out in heated rooms. We also had dinner in the spa restaurant, delicious miso soup, strangely shaped potstickers and fried rice with chicken. The myriad small side dishes are always a delight. It was surprisingly uncrowded for a Saturday evening and the most relaxing of birthday presents.

Cyprienne

Special Notice To Contributors

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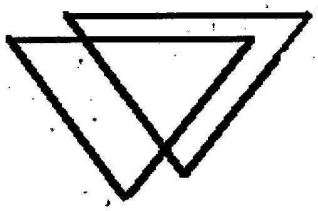


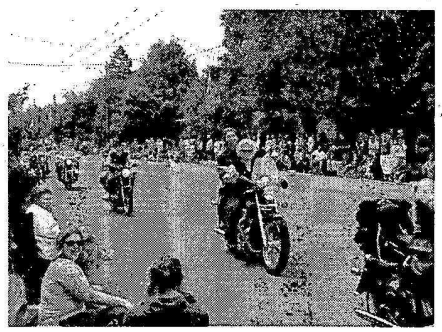
the list of the ignorant and fearful is long and there are still legislators that need to be replaced. Equality Washington asked me if I wanted to be on their list. I am already on their list, but the staffer didn't know that.

And so it went from one booth to the next. I met many old friends but most of the fresh young new volunteers had no idea who I was. They were fervently advocating ideas and actions that my generation had promoted years before and now they were carrying them forward themselves. The slogans were theirs now and I felt my own role was no longer important.

Perfect! Recognition is nice to get, mind you. Badges and awards, plaques and certificates, getting your name in the news or announced from a stage – these are all forms of recognition which we appreciate and usually deserve. They witness where we've been and that we were appreciated by our peers. Yet symbols and tokens are cold, empty, and lifeless. Like the titles and honors with which some activists like to decorate themselves in the absence of real accomplishment, these tokens, if accompanied by two dollars and fifty cents, might buy a latte.

The real reward of activism is to see one's words and accomplishments carried on and built upon by new people and new generations. The great Chinese philosopher and founder of Taoism, Lao Tsu, said: "A good leader is someone who accomplishes something and no one remembers his [or her] name. A great leader is someone who accomplishes something and others take credit for it."

When others adopt your baby, they end up feeding it. They invest their resources and energy and identities into it and you no longer have to. You are free to pursue new adventures and the next big thing in the confidence that the seeds you planted in the past will continue to be well tended by others. Granted, they may not raise your baby in exactly the same way you would have but it will live and grow without you nonetheless. If you birthed it with intentions that were healthy and strong, your baby will grow up to reflect your parentage but it will also express its own individual life. You may be surprised at how it turns out, but surprises are a whole lot more fun than old dust collecting trophies, aren't they?



I never get tired of Gay Pride Day. The roar of the bikes, the glitter of the queens, and the rank upon rank of organizations working for our community are always adrenalin for the spirit. But this year I got a big rush from seeing the next generation picking up the banners and continuing the fight. I feel pride – and I feel excitement because it frees me to find new places to get involved.

Janice Van Cleve is a freelance writer who enjoys surprises.
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That's a very nice viewpoint Janice. It made me think about a conversation I just had with another SBWN old-timer. We were rehashing our Pride experiences from this weekend and in particular the SBWN participation. We were both heavily involved in the planning and oversight in past years of our SBWN presence and this year we played much smaller parts. Both of us were mildly upset by some minor incidents (my donated table disappeared overnight, she had to organize the table display and sit booth for awhile when she wasn't signed up, etc.) but we both agreed that since we were not in charge things were going along just fine. And SBWN made money despite the small annoyances and everyone seemed to have a good time. The newer members, along with one long-term member taking the booth leadership role, managed to do the job very well and that really pleases me.

It is wonderful to see an organization you have been heavily invested in continue to thrive after you have pulled back.

Cyprienne

Valued Volunteers

Our Valued Volunteers column is our place to give some well-deserved recognition to the wonderful women who help keep SBWN running. This quarter's volunteer profile is on Shannon Buzard. Your enthusiasm for both work and play are inspiring to us all at SBWN. Thanks for stepping up to tackle some of our toughest projects, Shannon!

How long have you been involved with SBWN?

Since October 2004.

How did you find out about SBWN?

Christine recruited me at a mutual friend's apt, and then I stopped by and picked up info from Cyprienne at the booth at 2004 Pride.

What job do you volunteer for at SBWN?

Mostly whatever needs to get done. I really don't care for the spotlight, so I don't like being in charge. I just like to get things done.

Have you done other volunteer positions for SBWN?

Set up/tear down of the pride booth. Carry all the stuff to the start position of the Pride march. Bring pickles.

Have you done volunteer positions with other groups?

Yes, I always help out Dunshee House when I can. I used to volunteer a lot for The Emerald City trans women's group. I teach Sunday school to Junior and Senior High kids at a Methodist church in Woodinville.

Why do you volunteer? With SBWN? With any other group?

With SBWN it's mostly the sense of community with other Bi women that keeps me motivated. We've got some really wonderful girls in the group. This is the first time I have ever been able to join an LGBT organization and really feel like I fit in. You know, we all seemed to have gone through that decision tree—I'm not a lesbian, I'm not straight. 'Course for me, the tree started in a slightly different place.

What are your interests? Hobbies?

My kids, Paleoecology, Quantum Mechanics and its relation to cosmology of course, buttonholing and organizing WBTs (women born trans, i.e. transsexual women that are past transition) toward the political ends of women's rights, and trans rights.

How old are you?

Old enough to know better, but too young to resist. Forty-seven.

What is your real world job or profession? How do you make a living?

I am a semiconductor device physicist employed as a product engineer, failure analyst, and lab manager for Cypress Semiconductor in Lynnwood. That is to say that quantum mechanics can sometimes be a bit more than a hobby for me.

Do you have a family you want to tell us about? Husband, wife, partner, children, mother, father, siblings, cat, dog?

Divorced with two boys, five and seven years old, four sisters two of which won't talk to me since transition, a somewhat confused father and stepmother, two orange tranny cats (neutered males) who are distinctly not confused no matter how hard I try, and sadly no prospects of a partner on the horizon.

Shannon enjoying something tall and cool.

Where did you grow up?

Hmmm…in chronological order they are Ohio, California, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Wyoming, and Arizona. In chronostratigraphic order they are Devonian limestone-Ohio, Devonian shale-Ohio, Cretaceous sandstone-Wyoming, Waldron till-Illinois, Valderan till-Michigan, and Holocene pediment-Arizona.

How long have you lived in the Seattle area?

Three years, three months, seven days.

Do you identify as bisexual? When did you know?

Yes, the first time or currently? Oh heck, I'll give you both of them. When I knew I wasn't gay, and I wasn't straight was about a junior in high school. When I was sure I wasn't a lesbian, and I sure wasn't straight yet was about a year ago.

Anything else you would like the readership to know about you?

Yeah, I really like to rock out to everything from The Who, Pink Floyd, through Joan Jett, Patty Benatar, U2, Chrissie Hynde, to Catherine Wheel, Staind, and Amber Pacific. Somewhere in there you will also find everything from , Bowling for Soup to Mozart and J.S.Bach (although I've been know to dabble in PDQ Bach too on occasion, I'm not proud of it, it just is what it is).

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Hope for the Future

What follows is a posting from our email list for women who have attended a meeting (BWILD). I (and others I had talked to) had been feeling a bit down over some of the current social-political happenings, and Leilani shared this beautiful story and it transformed my day. This is the kind of thing that really gives me a lot of positive hope for where we will eventually get to in our country. I appreciate Leilani letting us print it. I hope it makes you feel as good as it made me feel.

Sheri

A friend of mine has brought her goddaughter over to my house a few times while she's getting a massage and the little girl and Bella [my dog] play in the living room. The last time she came over, I gave my friend the details about our handfasting ceremony renewal in Kauai. Well, and I had her goddaughter feed my pufferfish which she thought is soooo cool.

So my friend comes back today for another massage. I love working on friends - side note. Well, first she told me she bought tickets to go to Kauai. Second, she tells me this story - her goddaughter was talking to her mom and said she liked Holly Henry and Leilani's wedding rings. She said she had seen the pictures/note I made for my friend.

She told her mom that Holly Henry and Leilani are getting married in Hawaii. Her mom repeated with an asking tone "Holly Henry"? And the little girl [a kindergartener] explained to her mom as if it was so obvious but she'd explain it anyways to her mom, "oh that's Holly's boy name. See, some girls are born and are more like boys than girls and that's Holly's boy name and that's who Leilani loves." Her mom followed up with a question about whether she still wanted to come over to Leilani's house?

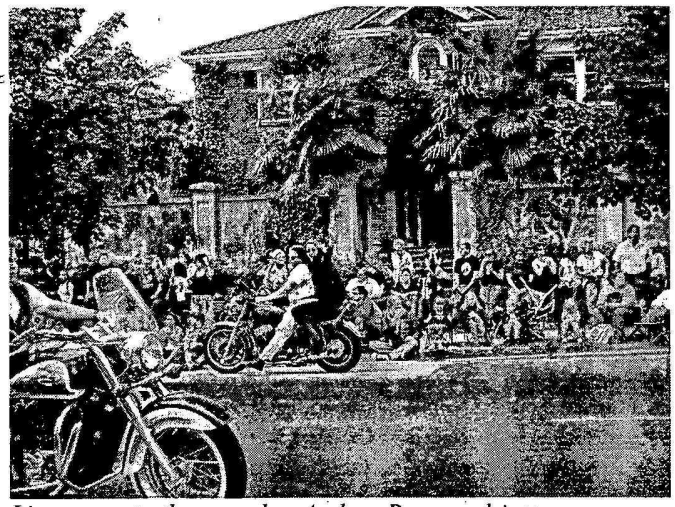
And she said well yea looking back at her mom like that was a silly question.

I guess my friend and the little girl's mom had a fun conversation later about how well that went. The little girl's mom had said she wasn't sure how to tell the little girl about gays but that apparently my friend had already had that conversation with her and obviously did a good job! My friend said yeah, they had one brief conversation after being at my house just that girls can love girls and boys love boys just like relating to some hetero relationships and love. And the little girl came up with the rest of it on her own and through observation and that beautiful perspective of a child.

They decided to wait to tell her the politics about girls marrying girls and boys marrying boys but they're gonna save that one for now.

Pride Experiences June 2005

It was my second year riding with Dykes on Bikes. An old friend who has a motorcycle invited me to join her last year when I was feeling down about a relationship ending. We had such a blast she invited me again this year. It is a fabulous way to experience Pride--there is this burst of energy at the beginning of the parade, both with the Dykes and with the spectators. Everyone on both sides is cheering and happy, and it is contagious. The women look spectacular on the bykes--some very butch with crewcuts and Harleys, others with long flowing hair and cleavage. I try to be a little flashy--both years I've pulled on my red cowboy boots and black feather boa.



Lisa waves to the crowd as Andrea Breuner drives.

I'll ride with Dykes on Bikes as many times as I'm invited. But I leave it up to my friend to do the inviting. I know if she gets a girlfriend (we are just pals) I'll probably be on the sidelines again. But it's an honor to have been asked.

Lisa

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I watched my third Pride from the sidewalk with a platonic friend (my husband works on weekends). I needed to see all of the marchers, all of the fabulous contributions that make up the Pride parade. After living in Everett for a year and now married to a straight man, I feel very separated from the queer community. So for me it was a reuniting with my queer self, my queer brothers and sisters. I met up with old friends from SBWN that I haven't seen in way too long who reminded me how important connection with other bisexual women is for me.

Deborah

BiNet and SBWN join forces at Pride!

Pride was good this year, I hardly volunteered at all. I marched with SBWN and BiNet. Did some drop in booth sitting after the march was over and contributed stuff for the booth but didn't stick around to help pack up. Lost my folding table, it just disappeared from the booth overnight. I paid for parking this year as I was late getting to the area but it was so much easier than driving around looking for a parking place, plus it was a school doing fund raising rather than a commercial lot. There seemed to be a lot more clapping and cheering for SBWN than in previous years. And the crowd of watchers lined the streets all the way to where we turned to head up to Volunteer Park.

Cyprienne

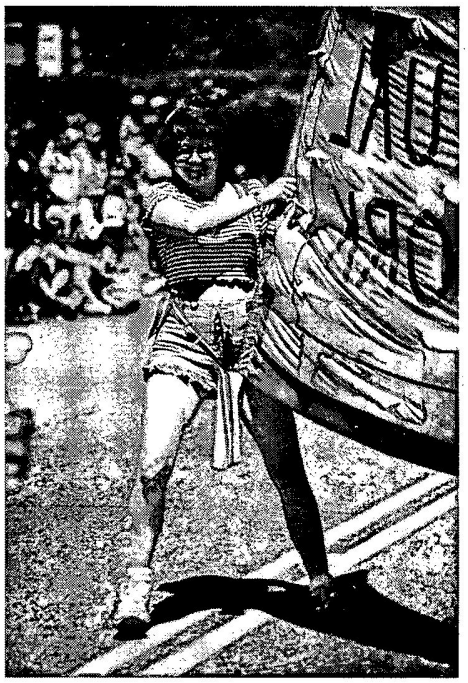
Pride 2005 – Some Random Thoughts by Sheri

I really enjoyed Pride this year. I hadn't been able to attend last year, and I realized that despite a feeling many I know have of it being 'same old, same old' it still can carry a lot of impact for me. Maybe some of that is due to the possibility that it may move next year.

This article is not about that move – but I would encourage readers to give it some thought. And, I also encourage you to submit your thoughts and feedback to the Pride Committee for as long as that process is open. My worries about moving include: it is challenging and costly enough for all-volunteer groups like ours to staff booths for two days, and in a location where we can get free parking (much less more days in an area where you must pay to park); I have seen how much having our meetings in Capital Hill has boosted our attendance, I kinda think it must do the same for Pride; Spokane is trying to create a 'gay district' like Capital Hill – doesn't this move somewhat undo that?; and, I worry about the mid-size crowd looking puny in an over-sized setting.

I don't have a total answer though and realize that other cities have much bigger, more exciting and more professional seeming events. I guess the question is what is the point? And do we need to shake things up and so moving would be best? Would it make us grow? Would it prevent SBWN from participating? If the answer to that last question is yes, after having seven new women in the first two meetings after Pride who say they found out about/connected with us there … I would hate to miss out on that community building opportunity in the future. Enough of that, I will now return to my real purpose for this article.

It was powerful for me to really see how far we have come in the past nine years since the first Pride where I marched in Seattle. Almost a decade ago, we were delirious to get over 10 people marching with us I seem to recall – and now we consistently have more like two dozen and up. Back then, we had a hand made banner that was lovely, but not strategically sized. We spent half the parade trying to not let it blow us down the street as it was less banner and more gigantic wind sail! Now we have a professionally made banner and a good-sized marching contingent with a strong BiNet and multi-gendered, multi-generational representation.



Even more striking to me has been the way in which the community response to SBWN has changed over time. When I was first marching with SBWN, the response from the crowd was often muted at best. We were even openly booed by a few people – people who were cheering other groups – so not the fundamentalists who are at the parade every year. They just said the same kinds of things to us as they said to everyone … we were all going to hell together. And unfortunately, back then, some of the more enthusiastic responders were reacting more to the stereotypes they held than to us. They assumed things about our sexual availability simply because of our bi-ness. Even the announcer, a well-known local queer celebrity, made a comment about us being willing to sleep with anyone.

Now, I really feel like the response from the crowd is genuinely positive and supportive. We are whole-heartedly cheered and the leering responses seem much more tied to our sheer hotness not stereotypes. We have a lot more people now who spontaneously join us (if only briefly) as we stride proudly down the street. More people clap vigorously when we walk by, and as I look in their faces I am buoyed by the open warmness and support I see.

At the same time, even with much more queer community support than we had in the mid 90's, Pride also reminds me why it is important to have groups like SBWN which are specifically working in the community to support bisexual women. I am reminded by the faces in which I see those expressions which say to me – "Wow, I didn't know there was a whole group for people like me." "You mean there are women who are married and queer?" "I don't have to make a choice?" "There is a community out there that might fit for

me?" Those faces and similar comments from women at meetings after Pride really reinvigorate me in my commitment to building this community and SBWN in particular.

www.robertagregory.com

Pride this year also reminded me about the continual nature of coming out – or as Lisa so cleverly called it – chronic coming out. This year I was feeling pretty in touch with the sensual side of my goddess self. All I really lacked was a bit more sun to encourage fewer clothes. Striding down the street, happy in my groove, I hear someone calling my name. I look over, and there is a woman enthusiastically calling to me… a woman I only have known in a professional context. I have seen her dozens of times, I really enjoy working with her, but I am always in those trappings of professionalism – suits, dress clothes, focused topic, notepads, pda's and cell phones. Suddenly I am 'out' – not just about my sexual orientation – but about my sensual goddess self. Suddenly I am wondering again about people's stereotypes about bisexuality, and 'what is she thinking'. I find myself contemplating my tendency towards passion – and how that manifests itself in my mission and advocacy orientation in my work and in my personal life. I struggled for a bit with the re-emergence of old fears, and was again reminded of the importance of SBWN being here for both myself and others to provide support for chronic coming out.

All in all, I found it to be a good Pride experience for myself at least this year. It was both fun and challenged me to think about my identity and my place in my community. I think that is a great combo. A lot of complexity can sometimes be hidden behind not a lot of clothes.

Off My Rack

They hang but I'm on the rack.
They live the life
I lack.

They live the life I can't see – they are the woman I can't be.

I buy them to prove my flair.
Prance around
show them off – no one is there.

I hang myself up, they breath for me.
They go the places, see the people, I can't see.

Look at my pretty panties – those are the best of my vanities.
They know the men – their joy -- their sin.

I'm all dressed up and no one to show.
That's OK the clothes know where to go.

They are the woman – they are free.
They do the living for me.

Elaine
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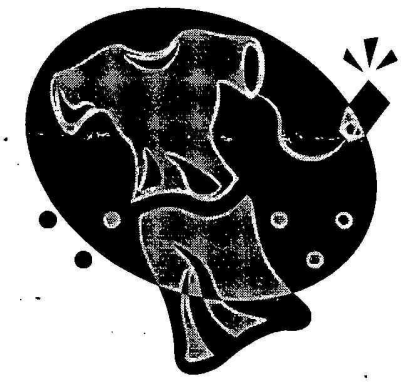

Maybe Better?

Maybe better? That's a thought I've had myself,
that all this pain can only bring wealth.

Wealth of spirit and richness of heart,
deep appreciation for a brand new start.

Knowledge is power, or so they say.
I'm forged by fire this very day.

What I thought would finish me,
has been the path to finally be free.

Free from what, I could not control.
Free to be happy, deep in my soul.

I am who I am, and that's ok.
This is pretty cool, I think I'll stay.

So many gifts I never knew,
friendship so deep, love so true.

I feel the future healing the past,
in this moment, the die is cast.

I won't have to wait for delight,
it's here right now and oh so right.

I think those words do ring true,
maybe better?
I'm so glad *you* knew.

Elaine

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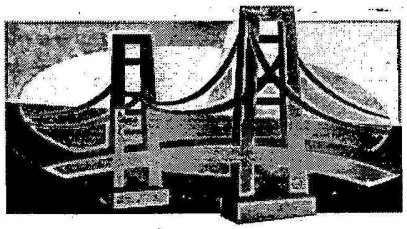

Knight Rider

Riding into the dawn ----- riding all night long
It's been a long night ----- of getting it on

Knight Rider - it must be dark inside her
Day breaks her jaw
Can't remember what she saw

She looked for shining armor – found cold hard steel
She needed light – found tarnished hearts – unreal

Knight Rider – The pain stays inside her
Day breaks her jaw
Can't believe what she saw

Found her steeds to ride – another to come inside
Rode the Son, set the Father on fire too

Knight Rider - you'll never get inside her
Day breaks her jaw
Can't forget what she saw

Elaine

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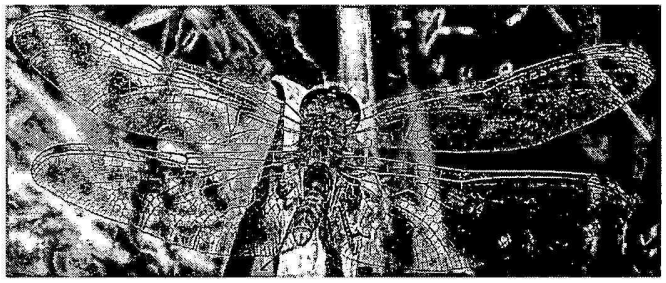


Visibility Is A Two-Way Street
By Peter A. Chvany

I'm a big fan of VH1. Actually, "fan" is too reserved; make it "junkie." I'm especially fond of "Behind The Music," which plays endless variations on the same "rise to fame, fall to disaster, return to success" story. They're Homeric epics for multimedia postmoderns: only the details change to protect the plotline. I also dig "Where Are They Now," where artists too minor to warrant an hour's exhumation can show off their post-fame partners and minivans, and/or their rehab certificates.

These shows routinely reveal that the performers in question never stopped making music, even out of the limelight. David Byrne of Talking Heads released several albums in the 1990s that are apparently excellent, even though his profile is low now. Mall princess Tiffany has an album out. We all know how Donny Osmond came back. Even Axl Rose is supposed to release a new record soon, despite jokes that he should have been a face on milk cartons over the last several years.

Some people assume that when they don't see these artists, it's because they've stopped working. More often, the pop culture machine has simply stopped putting them in our distracted faces. Cyndi Lauper dropped a greatest hits album not long ago; several of the tracks were from records other than the one everyone bought. Even The Call, a band hardly popular to begin with, had a song featured at the 2000 Democratic National Convention, and recorded great new material long after their supposed demise.

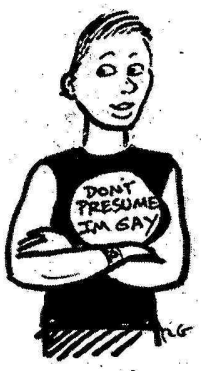
Many people who have "disappeared" are still around, if you look for them. But it's a complex world. Information overload is a fact of life. It's especially difficult to see or hear things you haven't trained yourself to notice.

I have friends who know bisexuals and have a clue about us, who still seem to think everyone who doesn't wear a big "Bi Pride" button must be either straight or gay.

www.robertagregory.com

Case in point: a gay friend recently pointed out a man he found attractive. Later that day, we saw the guy at lunch with a woman. Disappointed, my friend sighed, "oh well, maybe he's straight." I observed that lunching with a person of another sex doesn't make one straight, and my friend agreed she could be a co-worker or sister. I had a more specific point in mind. Maybe the woman was the man's wife or girlfriend: he could still be bi, even available.

For that matter, so could SHE. That might seem less important to my friend, but you never know: maybe SHE has a girlfriend two nights a week and wishes HE'D get a boyfriend instead of moping around the house. That would bring up the whole open-relationship dynamic, which isn't for everyone but I know tons of gay men who are more than happy to be somebody's part time lover. Point is: whatever the man was, I saw a possible bisexual because I've trained myself to see bisexuality, same as I cruise record stores looking for new stuff by artists who no longer grace the charts, instead of relying on the fickle finger of the Top Forty Countdown. My compatriot, bi-friendly as he is, saw only a lost opportunity. Such a habit of mind would be a shame if the guy is available.



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On a more serious level, that same habit of mind keeps bisexuals invisible even when we wave our freak flags high. Visibility is a two-way street. Some bisexuals could be more "out", but even I have had friends who know my identity, and who've heard my non-stop nagging about bi issues, forget my sexual orientation, or that of some other way-out bi activist.

Others seem to think I point out possible bisexuals just to make myself feel less minoritized. Well, sure but I'm also modeling better mental discipline. The old parlor trick of regarding anyone with a same-sex history as "gay" is getting harder to apply: too many people who really are gay are coming out.

Some folks go from disappointment to disappointment when they find out the person they were positive was gay turns out to be genuinely involved with an other-sex partner. Not to mention all the drama over the question of how Anne Heche or Julie Cypher could "go back."

None of that is necessary if you can see bisexuals. It's not really that hard. It just takes practice.

I recommend starting with Ricky Martin, whose refusal to identify as straight or gay seems very bisexual to me.

Originally published in The Slant as "Visibility is a two-way street", January 2001, Page 15.
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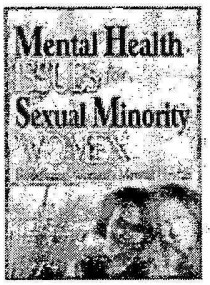
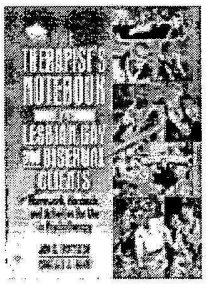
Queers and Mental Health: Three New Books Reviewed by Lisa Hake



Mental Health Issues for Sexual Minority Women: Redefining Women's Mental Health (Harrington Park Press)
Edited by Tonda L. Hughes, Carrol Smith, and Alice Dan

This collection of literature gets off to a good start with an article by local researcher Kimberly Balsam from the University of Washington, "Traumatic Victimization in the Lives of Lesbian and Bisexual Women: A Contextual Approach." Balsam is a seasoned professional in GLBT research, and her use of the word "bisexual" in the title of her article is telling. She doesn't do lip service; her work genuinely includes the perspectives and experiences of bi-identified women. Two more of the nine articles in this compilation specifically include "bisexual" in their title, reflecting the increasing awareness of researchers that "lesbian" does not, by default, include bisexual. In general, this book is an impressive overview of issues pertinent to queer women: body image, relationships, internalized homophobia. One caveat: it speaks to professionals in the field of mental health treatment, with articles dryly presented and filled with jargon. Well researched, but not a beach read.



The Therapist's Notebook for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients (The Haworth Clinical Practice Press)
By Joy S. Whitman and Cyndy J. Boyd and Associates

This is also a book for the practicing psychotherapist or psychologist. It is a creative and thorough collection of activities designed to assist clients exploring or coping with issues ranging from domestic violence to coming out. Most notable was an activity called "Overcoming Biphobia." The activity itself was a bit clumsy, but it could still be a good jumping off point for someone who needed it. Each activity includes an objective, a rationale, instructions, follow-up, contraindications, and suggested reading. Activities include worksheets, questionnaires, homework, and guided exercises. It is presented simply and clearly—the therapist could scan the table of contents, turn to the appropriate section, and spend just a few minutes reading it and preparing for a client. I would not recommend that an individual try this at home for themselves—the work is actively therapeutic and the assistance, support, and expertise of a professional is warranted.

The Mental Health Professions and Homosexuality: International Perspectives (Haworth Medical Press)
Edited by Vittorio Lingiardi, MD and Jack Drescher, MD

This collection of literature steps back from queer culture in the United States and reviews it through the lens of other regions—China, India, and Europe. In soliciting articles, the editors asked three questions: What are the prevailing theoretical models about homosexuality in the literature in your country? What is known about the clinical experience of gay and lesbian s seeking psychiatric help? And what is the status of openly gay and lesbian mental health professionals in your country? Note the dichotomies in these questions—the continuum of orientation is not reflected, and bisexuals seem invisible. Only one of the 12 articles mentions bisexuality in its title. However, although dry and academic, the articles are thoroughly researched and footnoted. It provides a historical and international perspective that is refreshing given that the United States often sees itself as the center of the universe.

Saucy Dish!
All things sensual and sexy!

Saucy Dish is on temporary hiatus! Saucy is very busy right now with her many activities in the sex-positive community. Thanks for all that you give to the community, Saucy! We eagerly anticipate more of your excellent advice.

This column offers sexuality education and insight into sex positive culture. Information contained within will be bold, opinioned and based on experience and research. Please ask questions about safer sex, our bodies, pleasure, relationships, sexual exploration, sex toys, sexy wear, flirting and more…

Send letters to SBWN Attn: Saucy Dish POB 30645, Greenwood Station, Seattle, WA 98113-0645 or email your questions to: saucydish@hotmail.com

Comments After Meetings

15 May 2005: Bi 101

"This was a great meeting! Great discussion."

"I am pleased by the great attendance tonight. Such a wide ranging discussion with lots of ideas and opinions."

"What a lovely group of women we had tonight. The discussion was lively and very stimulating. Surprisingly Bi 101 was different and new."

"I'm glad to hear other women speak of their experiences, it's so much more helpful than books."

"I appreciate having a comfortable atmosphere to discuss these types of highly personal issues."

"I love being bi."

17 July 2005: Coming Out

"What a great meeting tonight. I loved the deep sharing that went on. I'm very glad that we have this place where we can be free about our experiences in life and know there will be others who will listen and not judge."

"It was wonderful to sit in a room with 14 women and realize both the complexity and the shared community of our collective experience."

"I am very glad that I came and I wish that meetings were more often but I always enjoy being. I am glad that I am open with myself and my family as a bisexual woman."

"There's such variety here. It's wonderful!"

"I am relieved to meet women like myself. I thought I had to be either totally lesbian or totally straight."

"What a blessing to see all the new and familiar faces and to hear the honest sharing, wisdom and support of my familiars. We are all courageous individuals who make choices that are in our integrity and it is beautiful to honor that together in community."

"I'm so glad there's a group of strong, dynamic, bisexual women! Thanks for the great discussion and warm welcomes."

"I can only wish that there had been more time to extend the wonderful conversation. I can't wait for the next meeting."

7 August: The Art of Seduction

"Fantastic as usual Leilani! We actually discussed a much wider range of topics (or more topics were related) than I expected. Great to be having 10+ women at every meeting these days too!"

"Unique and creative facilitation – and lots of interesting questions!"

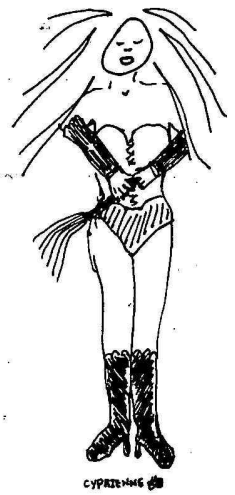
"I love the new ideas to try now. Awesome info on a huge topic, and the seduction games were fantastic!!"

"I really enjoy this topic and I want to find new women partners."

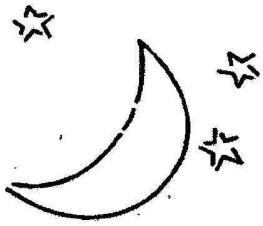
"The upfront discussion was great and hearing other perspectives and input on seduction issues was good. Maybe structuring the discussion with more personal experiences so as to have persons' stories (for those who are comfortable sharing). Thanks!"

"Great Group! Will be coming here more often! Please keep this going!! I can't wait for the social events."

"Informative, serious, fun and funny!"



The "WuWu" Page



...for entertainment only...

Horoscopes

Leo Jul 22 to Aug 23

Key word: Clarity – There has always seemed to be a flurry of activity around you. Sometimes it can be difficult for you to get a clear picture of your priorities and personal goals. You are entering a new phase that will allow you to organize your life better as you begin to achieve more and more clarity.

-You are spending less time celebrating than you used to. Contrary to what you may have believed would happen; you are feeling a new sense freedom as a result of staying in more often. You may have a minor setback in matters that involve the government or employer. Rest assured that this is a temporary situation. You will quickly feel on top of things again.

Virgo Aug 23 to Sept 23

Key word: Trust – This is kind of a hard one for you. You will trust to a point but you don't like taking chances. While it is wise to be careful; now would be a good time to step outside yourself and trust someone else to get a job done. You will benefit greatly if you do.

-Your sense of judgment is right on these days. Although you're feeling a bit off balance lately, you can safely trust your own gut feeling. Go with what you know. It will enhance your home life immensely.

Libra Sept 23 to Oct 23

Key word: Openness –Some people would say that you are a very private person. They don't understand how straightforward you truly are. There is no reason to change the way you operate. Your frank nature makes others believe that you are holding back. Keep this in mind when you are in a situation where communication is crucial.

-Oh! You just are finished feeling stuck and the next thing you know, you are just too full of yourself. Don't worry too much about your ego. You can keep it in check well enough when there is a good reason. For now, enjoy your glory as you will soon be coming into your own and feeling justified in being a bit egotistical. You will float back to earth softly and reign yourself in again, but the strides you have made will be long lasting.

Scorpio Oct 23 to Nov 22

Key word: Honesty-Take some time this season, as nature comes into abundance, to consider what honesty means to you. Consider who of your friends and loved ones are being honest with you and why. Try new perspectives. Listen carefully when communicating with those close to you. The true nature of honesty is revealed to you now that you have the most to offer.

-You don't feel you have a handle on what's truly happening right now. You feel a separation of some sort is necessary, but you really don't want to be the one to go. There is nothing left in the old situation for you. Time to take your assets and build new.

Sagittarius Nov 22 to Dec 21

Key word: Release – Just let go. This is hard, it's true, but trust those around to catch you if you should fall. It's more likely that you will have the surest footing ever. Remember, it's just as important to have support when you succeed. Allow for happiness to flow by releasing the good and the bad.

- You have a new plan that is very highly regarded by those in the know. Avoid listening to gossip, it will push you in the wrong direction. Keep pressing forward each step toward your goal will elevate the stress, which has been slowly building to this point.

Capricorn Dec 21-Jan 20

Key word: Tenderness – You are a very caring and nurturing individual. Don't forget the details. Tenderness. Add a healthy serving of true tenderness while you are caring for others. That is where you will find your reward.

-Justice is on your side. You needn't fear that your good deeds will be punished this time around. Listen for good news soon. Relatives of very close friends are making up a surprise for you. In addition, there appears to be financial relief just around the bend.

Aquarius Jan 20 to Feb 18

Key word: **Inspiration** – You are so inspired by the continued warm weather that you have many new projects planned. Consider making lists and keeping a journal of your plans so they do not dissipate in the coming winter.

-Take care of yourself. This does not mean to be selfish, ***care for yourself.*** Bide your time while building up your physical and emotional health. Something will be revealed that is of great value and will lead you to lucrative work.

Pisces Feb 18 to Mar 20

Key word: Purpose - Move with purpose. Act as if you have a reason to be where you are, and you will. You are moving with the will and force of a powerful competitor. Be aware of the physical and material ramifications at stake and who is competing for what. Oddly, you will find your way to success in the form of a traditional solution.

Aries Mar 20 to April 20

Key word: Enthusiasm – You often like to kick back and let others lead the party. Try making a move and you will see that others will be equally enthusiastic about your plans.

-You have a swiftness and sure approach about you, which will see you through. There is so much potential surrounding you now. Reach out and grab your prize. Great things are flowing toward you now. Take in as much as possible and retain what you can for future use; as well as getting new things started right now.

Taurus Apr 20 to May 21

Key word: Truth The truth you know is fleeting. Consider listening to others and understand that there is more than one perspective to your group's dilemma.

- It is your nature to keep your thoughts to yourself. Others are not so careful. There is something to be learned from those who speak their mind. Study them carefully. Some are more eloquent and effective then others. Follow their example; you can get your point across well enough without stepping into trouble. Brainstorming with a group can be scary for you, but have confidence that your ideas will be taken well in informal as well as more serious settings.

Gemini May 21 to Jun 21

Key word: Synthesis– Nothing is new to you. Remember to look inside when trying to understand what goes on around you. You are filled with the understanding of many kinds of interactions between people. It is your gift to grasp relationship dynamics with ease.

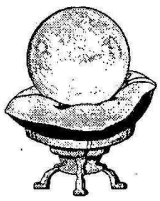
- It is often humbling to observe a Gemini at work among people, so is it equally as startling to see you struggle with interpersonal conflict. It may look bleak right now (as if a part of your dignity has been stolen) but the perpetrator will soon have to return what he or she has taken from you. With this return of dignity also comes a monetary reward and the position that you have been born to hold.

Cancer Jun 21 to Jul 22

Key word: Grace- Kick back and accept the way things are now. Through this acceptance you will learn the patience needed to bear the state of grace you are about to receive. Wear it with humility and kindness or it will lose its meaning. And you will lose all it has to give you and those you love.

- A long lost partnership returns and flourishes in this wonderful season of beginnings and endings. Potential runs high for you now. Think of keeping yourself on track as well as helping others with your newly acquired wealth.

Send your questions for our psychic to
cowbone@eathlink.com



Neptune
Studios and Gallery
Visit the Gallery Site:
www.neptunestudio.com
We are currently seeking artists to show their work on our web-site
Professional FINE ART artists are welcome to submit their work for review.
For details contact Jan at cowbone@earthlink.net

Calendar

Seattle Bisexual Women's Network offers support and discussion groups at the Seattle LGBT Community Center. For schedule updates and other events, please call our phone line at (206)517-7767, or visit our website:

http://www.geocities.com/sbwn/.

SBWN group meetings are typically held on the first and third Sunday of each month from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM. When attending support group meetings, please refrain from wearing perfumes or other scented products for the comfort of all.

Schedule of Meetings

Sunday, August 7: The Art of Seduction. How to initiate dialogue about sex, how and when to talk about desires and intentions, safer sex and more!

Sunday, August 21: Books—Summer Reading. Back by popular demand! Come join us and help us cover the table with a myriad of genres.

Sunday, September 4: No meeting, holiday weekend.

Sunday, September 18: Erotic Writing Workshop. Put your sexy thoughts into words on paper...visual aides welcome!

Sunday, October 2: Business Meeting/Potluck. Come and help determine topics, volunteer, and participate in the way SBWN runs.

Sunday, October 16: Bisexuals in the Media. Discuss how bisexuals are portrayed on television, in movies and other media.

Sunday, November 6: Growing Up Queer. Share thoughts and experiences about crushes, confusion and growing up different (or not so different).

Sunday November 20: Giving Back—Volunteerism and Community Activism.

Sunday December 4: Open Rap/Potluck.

Local Groups

Seattle Bisexual Women's Network
PO Box 30645, Seattle, WA 98113-0645.
http://www.geocities.com/sbwn/
E-mail: sbwn@hotmail.com

Seattle LGBT Community Center
The Center's mission is to create a meeting place for the LGBT community to grow together, increase public understanding, and celebrate our diversity.
1115 East Pike Street
(206) 323-LGBT (5428)
http://www.seattlelgbt.org

Polyfidelity Discussion Group
Support group and community for people in or interested in multipartner relationships. Discussions and literature on responsible non-monogamy, intimate networks, alternative relationships and community. Bi-monthly potluck discussions are held at 5:30 pm at the SPCC (Sex Positive Community Center, aka "The Wet Spot"). 1630 15th Ave W., Seattle, WA. (206) 728-4533.
http://www.scn.org/~spg/index.html

BiNet Seattle
BiNet Seattle is a bisexual non-profit, mixed gender, social and support organization created to foster a visible community for bisexual, bi-curious people, and their partners in the Puget Sound area. http://www.binetseattle.org

Fridays 7:30-9pm: Discussion / Support group meetings for bisexual and bi-curious men and women, their partners and other bi-friendly folk at the Seattle LGBT Community Center.

Lesbian Resource Center
A community–based organization committed to advancing the status of lesbians by combating oppression and promoting empowerment, visibility, and social change. (206) 322-3953.
http://www.lrc.net

Seattle LGBT Community Center
life revolves around a center
lesbian • gay • bisexual • transgender
1115 East Pike Street, Seattle, WA 98122 - 206.323.LGBT (5428)
info@SeattleLGBT.org - Open 7 days a week, Noon to 9 pm